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Letter dated 23 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and further to my letter dated 18 November 1998 (A/53/687-S/1998/1102), I have the honour to draw Your Excellency's attention to new violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus and of the flight information region (FIR) of Nicosia by military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force, recorded on 19, 20 and 21 November 1998.

On 19 November 1998, 18 military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force (6 F-16, 8 F-4, 2 RF-4, 1 C-130 and 1 Gulfstream) entered the Nicosia FIR, violating international air traffic regulations. The six F-16 aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the area of Karpasia and landed afterwards at the illegal airport of Lefkoniko in the occupied area of the Republic, before taking off at 1446 hours on the same day, returning to the Ankara FIR. The two RF-4 aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over and along the areas of Karpasia, Mesaoria, Lefkoniko, Tymbou, Morfou and Kormakitis before returning to the Ankara FIR. The C-130 and the Gulfstream aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the area of Mesaoria and landed afterwards at the illegal airports of Lefkoniko and Tymbou, respectively, in the occupied area of the Republic, before taking off (the C-130 at 1008 hours and the Gulfstream at 1645 hours on the same day), returning to the Ankara FIR. The eight F-4 aircraft, after their flight within the Nicosia FIR, exited towards the Ankara FIR.

On 20 November 1998, 17 military aircraft of the Turkish Air Force (14 F-16, 2 F-4 and 1 C-130) entered the Nicosia FIR violating international air traffic regulations. Four of the F-16 and the two F-4 aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the areas of Karpasia and Mesaoria before returning to the Ankara FIR. Six of the F-16s violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the areas of Morfou

and Kormakitis before returning to the Ankara FIR. The C-130 violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the area of Mesaoria and landing afterwards at the illegal airport of Lefkoniko, in the occupied area of the Republic, before taking off at 1442 hours on the same day and returning to the Ankara FIR. Four of the F-16s, after their flight within the Nicosia FIR, exited towards the Ankara FIR. Furthermore, the four F-16s that had landed on 19 November 1998 at the illegal airport of Lefkoniko in the occupied area of the Republic returned to the Ankara FIR.

On 21 November 1998, two transport aircraft of the Turkish Air Force (one CN-235 and one C-130) entered the Nicosia FIR, violating international air traffic regulations. The aircraft violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by flying over the area of Mesaoria, landing afterwards at the illegal airports of Lefkoniko and Tymbou, respectively, in the occupied area of the Republic, before taking off (the CN-235 at 1028 hours and the C-130 at 1053 hours on the same day), returning back to the Ankara FIR.

As stated in my previous letters, such unauthorized intrusions into the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus are in violation of international air traffic rules and, at the same time, are in contravention of the provisions of the Security Council resolutions on Cyprus which state that such overflights increase tension on the island and undermine efforts towards achieving a final settlement.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, I wish to strongly protest these new provocative acts by Turkey against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. The frequency and intensity of these airspace violations are a further reminder of Turkey's offensive disregard of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and all the relevant decisions of the Organization on the question of Cyprus.

Furthermore, these continuing overflights by the Turkish Air Force, as well as the presence of the Turkish military occupation forces on the island, constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sotos ZACKHEOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative